

Guided Reading— Early Fluent and Fluent Readers: Fiction—Understanding Character

Presenter Notes

Purpose

Guided reading for early fluent and fluent readers often provides small group “guided practice” of strategies and concepts presented during the whole class mini-lesson. The whole class mini-lesson introduces the concept or strategy, and guided reading provides the opportunity for students to apply the concept or strategy with teacher support as needed.

Many mini-lessons and supporting guided reading lessons for early fluent and fluent readers involve developing comprehension strategies for reading in different genres. This workshop is designed to help students better understand characters so they can better understand the stories they read.

This workshop is developed around one of many possible mini-lessons, with follow-up guided reading, that could support students in better understanding characters and the relationships among characters in the story. The purpose of this lesson, and related lessons, is to provide students with the knowledge that they can do things to help themselves better understand and enjoy what they are reading.

Materials

Overhead Projector

[Quote—Explicit Instruction by Fountas and Pinnell](#)

Mini-Lesson

[Mini-Lesson—Understanding Characters](#)

My Rotten Red-Headed Older Brother by Patricia Polacco or any touchstone text
Overhead of page 4 of *My Rotten Red-Headed Older Brother* (if that text is used)

[Inferring: Developing a Theory about Characters](#)

[Scaffold for Inferring by Jan Richardson \(adapted from Laura Robb\)](#) (for classes just being introduced to inferring about characters)

Guided Reading Lesson

[Quote—Guided Reading by Regie Routman](#)

[Guided Reading Lesson Plan—Understanding Characters](#)

Every Living Thing, “Shells” by Cynthia Rylant or another short picture book or story at the students’ instructional/independent level

[Inferring: Developing a Theory about Characters](#) **OR**

[Scaffold for Inferring by Jan Richardson \(adapted from Laura Robb\)](#)

Information for Presenters

- Explain the purpose of this workshop. You may want to point out that these types of mini-lessons and guided reading lessons are helpful to students on CSAP.

Students are often asked to explain or respond to stories, nonfiction, poetry, fables, and directions on CSAP.

- Begin the workshop with the Fountas and Pinnell quote about the need for explicit instruction.

Mini-Lesson

- Model the mini-lesson. During the active involvement section, have teachers turn and talk to develop their theory of the character.
- In addition to the graphic organizer, *Inferring: Developing a Theory about Characters*, another organizer is included. Scaffold for *Inferring*, included in the packet from Jan Richardson, has guiding questions to support students just learning how to notice what a character says, does, thinks, or feels. Teachers may choose to use whichever organizer is most helpful to students.
- Remind teachers that the mini-lesson introduces the strategy. Guided reading will provide students with teacher support, in a small group, to apply the strategy.

Guided Reading Lesson

- Start with the quote by Regie Routman. Discuss how strategies introduced in mini-lessons are often practiced, with teacher support, in guided reading lessons.
- Pass out copies of “Shells” from *Every Living Thing* by Cynthia Rylant. Introduce the text as suggested on the Guided Reading Lesson Plan.
- On the guided reading lesson plan are suggestions as to where to chunk the text and possible discussion questions. As in all guided reading lessons, decisions on discussion questions, use of the graphic organizer to support understanding, and time needed for reading and discussion, is dependent on the needs and interest of the group.

Note: Text consideration is very important. Accountable talk will not happen without texts that are interesting and engaging. Also, text should be relatively easy for most readers with only a few vocabulary words that might be unfamiliar. With easier text, students can put all of their energy into critical analysis and not in decoding or figuring out the meaning of new words.

Discussion of Related Mini-Lessons and/or Guided Reading Lessons

- Discuss other mini-lessons/guided reading lessons that could support students in their understanding of character development (e.g., the way characters change during the story, relationships between characters, how knowing characters in fiction would support students’ understanding of real-life characters in nonfiction) Refer to page 135 in *Guided Readers and Writers, Grades 3–6* for other possible areas of focus.